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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, ROAD MAP

Summary

-- Lead stories in all papers today (08/12) focus on the continued debate in the Jordanian Parliament regarding the government's performance in advance of a "vote of confidence" measure on Thursday, August 13. In these reports, correspondents note the criticism of the government from Islamist deputies, and the declaration of several Islamists to vote "no" on the measure. Another lead story today focuses on the work of an FBI investigation team looking into the bombing of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad.

Editorial Commentary

-- "The Iraqi Governing Council .Becomes `Iraqi' Only After the End of the Occupation!"

Daily columnist Bater Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (08/12): "The Arab League is correct in refusing to recognize the Iraqi Governing Council for one simple reason - that it was formed under the U.S. occupation. If this Council was formed without the presence of U.S. tanks, it would indeed have been the best political arrangement for Iraq. But one cannot discuss procedures and details and forget the main principle -- that this is a political arrangement based on an occupation, and hence, it should be rejected. . . We wish the Iraqi Governing Council success in liberating Iraq from occupation and regaining stability in the country and establishing a new Iraqi state that all Iraqis deserve. We welcome the Iraqi Governing Council amongst the Arabs once U.S. tanks leave Iraq. But in the presence of those tanks, this Council will remain a political arrangement under occupation and will remain unacceptable to Arabs."

-- "Bush and the Road Map"

Commenting on President Bush's description of the security wall that Israel is building as a "problem," daily columnist Musa Hawamdeh writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (08/12): "We want to wait and see if Bush will succeed in convincing Sharon that the wall is a problem and that it is better to build a peace wall rather than a war and racism wall. However, he will not dare to make any statement or exert any pressure on Sharon, neither behind nor in front of the scenes, as some Arab analysts are deluded to think. The truce may not last long, although we would have hoped that it last long enough for Bush to understand that the problem is not just with the wall, but with the Zionist mentality and the United States' absolute bias to Israel that will not help establish peace or justice, and that leniency towards Israel which translate to strong support for it. We are aware of the gentle language used by U.S. officials to criticize Israel while the Arabs and Palestinians are bombarded with missiles, statements, and orders."

HALE